



LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Celebrating 25 Years of Advocacy & Achievement

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Martha Trevino Powell
Dr. Harriette F. Williams

APPROVED MINUTES

The General Meeting of the Commission for Children and Families was held on Monday, **April 5, 2010**, in Room 739 of the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles. **Please note that these minutes are intended as a summary and not as a verbatim accounting or transcription of events at this meeting.**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT (Quorum Established)

Carol O. Biondi	Dr. Maria Rochart
Ann Franzen	Sandra Rudnick
Susan F. Friedman	Stacey Savelle
Helen A. Kleinberg	Adelina Sorkin, LCSW/ACSW
Dr. La-Doris McClaney	Martha Trevino Powell
Steven M. Olivas, Esq.	

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT (Excused/Unexcused)

Patricia Curry	Dr. Harriette F. Williams
Rev. Cecil L. Murray	

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Savelle at 10:08 a.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS

Self introductions were made.

III. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

• April 5, 2010

Vice Chair Savelle noted that Item VII, "Director's Report" would be taken prior to Item V, "Chair's Report."

Action Taken:

On motion of Vice Chair Savelle, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg, the agenda for April 5, 2010, was unanimously approved.

500 West Temple Street, Hall of Administration, Room B-22, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 213/974-1558 Fax: 213/625-5813

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IV. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

- **February 1, 2010**

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner Sorkin, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg, and duly carried (Commissioner Rochart abstaining), the minutes for February 1, 2010, were approved with the following changes under the “Update on the DCFS Visitation Work Plan”:

- Page 2, last sentence of the first paragraph was revised to read, “The Visitation Work Plan took six years to develop, and was accomplished through the efforts of the Reunification ~~Committee~~, DCFS Visitation and the Juvenile Court Visitation Committees ~~and as well as~~ DCFS Deputy Directors.”
- Page 2, fourth bullet in the second paragraph was revised to read, “Training and guidance given to caregivers, relative caregivers, or guardians, has a “~~no~~ coaching **and training**” perspective. It is not restricted to child supervision, and includes a training component that focuses on health and education **and birth parents’** well-being.
- Page 3, first bullet second sentence was revised to read, “A **foster** parent isn’t necessarily qualified to be a Visitation Coach.”
- Page 4, fourth paragraph fourth bullet was revised to read, “~~Although the goal of~~ **When** the Visitation Work Plan ~~is to have~~ indicates liberalization, ~~when will implementation begin for children ages 6 and 12 months~~ this should occur rather than waiting for the next court date.”

V. CHAIR’S REPORT

There was none.

VI. PRESENTATIONS

- **Emergency Response Study**

Lisa Parrish, DCFS
Marilynne Garrison, DCFS

Lisa Parrish, DCFS, provided a *PowerPoint* presentation ([copy on file](#)) on the “Emergency Response (ER) Study” conducted by the Quality Improvement (QI) Section and responded to questions posed by the Commission.

Ms. Parrish reported the following:

- Quality Improvement reviewed 630 ER cases dating back to the 1st Quarter of 2009 were reviewed by the QI Section compiled from data provided by DCFS’ regional offices and several specialized programs.

- Record Review findings identified strengths in the conduct of ER investigations. DCFS strong points include;
 - Mandatory response times.
 - Interviewing families in their primary language.
 - Interviewing parents, perpetrators and others identified in the home.
 - Addressing allegations listed on the referral.
 - Action decision supported by the evidence.
- Six critical areas of need and focus for ER investigations consist of:
 1. Collateral contacts.
 2. Contacting the mandated reporter or reporting party.
 3. Review of prior history.
 4. Interviewing children privately and/or alone.
 5. Structured decision-making.
 6. Linking families to appropriate services.

Action Taken:

The Commission received and filed the ER Study provided by Lisa Parrish, DCFS ([copy on file](#)).

● **DCFS Red Team**

Jennifer Lopez, DCFS

By Common Consent, this presentation was continued to April 19, 2010.

● **Data Systems – Family and Children Index (FCI)**

**Carlos Pineda, CEO
Service Integration Branch**

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Second Supervisorial District, addressed the Commission and commented that he supports the concept of the FCI system which was an important step to enable County officials to share information through a common medium, and address emergency response needs for at-risk youth. However, he stated there are still significant challenges and the current system is not doing what it was intended to accomplish. As a result, the County must look at legislative solutions to facilitate changes and improvements as well as implement new technologies to improve the process.

Carlos Pineda and Garrison Smith, CEO Service Integration Branch, and Kathy House, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, reported on the progress and implementation of the County's FCI. The FCI Queries Report for the period of 07/01/09 through 04/05/10 ([copies on file](#)) was presented. The following was reported:

- In 1992 the Family and Children's Index (FCI), a customized database, was authorized by the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 18961.5.

- The following Los Angeles County Departments are able to use the FCI system: Children and Family Services (DCFS); District Attorney (DA); Mental Health (DMH); Probation; Public Health; Public Social Services (DPSS); and the Sheriff's Department.
- FCI is a "*pointer*" database that allows users from a County agency to get information on other agencies that have had contact with the family.
- Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT) were formed with the intention of communication and data sharing between County agencies, and FCI provides that information specifically allowed by WIC 18961.5.
- 1,200 County staff was trained on the FCI data system between November 2009 and January 2010.
- At least three agency representatives need to be present to exchange information, and such exchanges can take place via telephone. However, the District Attorney is developing legislation to reduce staff required to form an MDT from three to two, which would expedite the flow of information among FCI agencies.
- Information on non-family members (i.e. common-law husband, boyfriend, etc.) is not available in FCI at the present time, but will be included in the expansion efforts planned for legislative approval.
- Standardization on the FCI is underway to enable all Departments to have a mutual understanding on the use of the database.
- The FCI is does not share information across Counties.
- A set of measures and technical enhancements to the FCI application will be implemented by no later than June 30, 2010.

Action Taken:

The Commission received and filed the FCI Report ([copies on file](#)) by Carlos Pineda, Garrison Smith, and Kathy House, CEO. Copies of the following documents were distributed: Family Children's Index (FCI) Flow ([copy on file](#)) and a CEO Status report on FCI dated March 9, 2010 ([copy on file](#)).

- **Title IV-E Waiver Update** **Lisa Parrish, DCFS**

By Common Consent, this presentation was continued to April 19, 2010.

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Trish Ploehn, DCFS, reported the following:

- Contrary to recently published newspaper reports, there has not been an increase in child fatalities in Los Angeles County. The highest period of child fatalities was over ten years ago, in 1998 and 1999, when there were 20 child fatalities in each year.
- SB 39 requires the Department to release information, under certain circumstances, to anybody who would like to access it for cases involving child fatalities or critical incidents. As a result, child fatality information is more accessible to the general public and increasing public awareness.
- In January 2009, an Emergency Response (ER) Study was conducted, interviewing over two hundred people, and 630 ER referrals were examined. The purpose of the study was to conduct a systematic, in-depth examination of ER investigations to determine system-wide levels of performance and areas of need and strengths.
- Recent child fatality information demonstrated the following:
 1. There is uncertainty as to where fatalities are most likely to happen.
 2. The perpetrator of the fatality, involving younger children, is usually the mother's boyfriend or male companion.
 3. In the cases of older children, the mother often times has mental health issues.
 4. The top three concerns are substance abuse, mental health, and domestic violence.
- Reunification is not a contributing factor or concern relative to child fatalities.
- Structured Decision Making (SDM) is used in every referral; however, the Department is looking at whether SDM is properly utilized.
- Increased emphasis will be placed on attempting to identify potential risk in the future.
- The core academy (first 8-week program for newly-hired CSWs) will be revitalized. Underway are the following: 1) more training in mentoring and coaching; 2) the ER academy will provide training on how to do more in-depth investigations.

- The Board of Supervisors voted to terminate the contract with United Care, Inc. (UCI) for Foster Family Agency (FFA) Services. A “Do Not Use” designation has been placed on this agency ensuring that children will no longer be placed in their homes. DCFS is assisting foster care homes who want to transfer from United Care to another FFA. If a foster home does not want to transfer to another FFA, DCFS will place the children in other homes.
- DCFS, the Auditor-Controller, County Counsel, and the State have drafted a plan that began in the first week of April 2010. Approximately 5,000 children in approximately 2,500 homes will be interviewed, and all FFAs will be reviewed over the next four weeks. A comprehensive 3-page checklist will be used for assessment.
- Gene Gilden is returning to DCFS to assist in reinstating the OACEU Division.

Action Taken:

Director Ploehn’s verbal report was received and filed.

VIII. MOTION TO APPROVE A LETTER TO FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA REGARDING THE COMMISSION’S EFFORTS TO ENHANCE CHILDHOOD WELLNESS

**Adelina Sorkin, Chair
Childhood Wellness
Committee**

Commissioner Sorkin reported on the draft letter to First Lady Michelle Obama regarding the Commission’s efforts in support of her “Let’s Move Initiative,” and the “Community Wellness & Healthy Lifestyle Trainings” for relative caregivers.

Action Taken:

On motion of Commissioner Rochart, seconded by Commissioner Kleinberg, and unanimously carried, the letter from the Commission to First Lady Obama, was approved in concept with minor changes ([copy on file](#)).

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was none.

X. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There was none.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Vice Chair Savelle at 12:05 p.m.